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SUBJECT: BURUNDI AT THE UN: CONSENSUS TO RENEW BINUB; SOUTH AFRICA WITHDRAWING ITS TROOPS

**¶1.** (SBU) The United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) was before the Security Council on December 11. The Burundian PermRep told the Council the names of an independent electoral commission will be announced "in the coming days," a critical step for the organization of 2010 elections. All Council members supported renewing BINUB's mandate for another year. All members were encouraged by a December 4 agreement between the Government of Burundi (GOB) and the rebel group Palipehutu-FNL, bringing the final armed group into negotiations with the GOB.

**¶2.** (SBU) During private consultations following the public session of the Council, BINUB Head Mahmoud said he hoped disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the Palipehutu-FNL would start soon. He also said BINUB's major focus was preparation for the 2010 elections. South African PermRep Kumalo said his country, after 13 years of assisting Burundi in keeping the peace, would withdraw its troops by December 31, 2008. Kumalo said South Africa, Uganda, and Tanzania are the regional guarantors of the peace process, but now it was time for Burundi to move its country forward.

**¶3.** (SBU) Ambassador DiCarlo said in private consultations BINUB needed to assist the Government of Burundi address human rights violations, especially the arrest and detention of activists and sexual violence against women and girls, and vigorously prosecute perpetrators. She stressed U.S. support for free and fair elections in 2010. NOTE: BINUB's mandate is expected to be renewed by December 19. END NOTE.  
Khalilzad